

and it holdeth as well in *secret* as in *publike*; so that if a man were sure to do a mischief and never be discovered, he would never the less abhor it, as being not unknown to God and conscience. A man that feareth not God and conscience, will never stick to do a mischief, if he may escape the eye and revenging hand of man: *Faux* will set fire to the train to blow up King and Parliament, if he see but a probability of escape. But he that feeleth the bonds of God upon him, dare not rebel.

4. *Holiness* destroyeth *Self-love* which is the Spring of all *discontents*, and *disobedience*: and teacheth a man to own no Ends or interests but what stand in *due subordination* to the honour of God and the *common good*; and in *due coordination* with the welfare of our neighbours: Whereas the *ungodly* are every man of them an Idol to himself: *self* is the only Lord and Law, set up against God and King and Countrey; And if God or King, or Countrey be served by them, it is but in subserviency to themselves, as they look to attain some wealth or dignity or honour by it. The *self-seeking man* is faithful and trusty to no man but himself. And the *self-denying man* hath no great temptation to be unfaithful.

5. *Holiness* doth partly consist of *charity*, and teacheth men to do as they would be done by: And how can it goe ill with any societies where *Love* prevaileth, and men are as loth to *wrong* as to *be wronged*, and to do hurt to others as to themselves!

6. *Holiness* brings down Gods blessing on each particular subject: and maketh a people the delight of God; and brings them under the promise of his favour. *Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. What abundance of promises are there to the obedient? *Isa.* 1. 19. *Deut.* 4. 30. *Exod.* 23. 22. *Deut.* 11. 27. & 13. 4. & 30. 2, 8, 20. *Jer.* 7. 23. & 11. 4, 7. &c.

7. *Holiness* maketh men meek and patient, and teacheth subjects not to make too great a matter of any injury that is done them; nor to censure unwarrantably the actions of their superiours: nor to murmur and stir up *discontents*; but quietly to bear all in obedience to God, and for the common good.

8. *Holiness* disposeth men to *Unity* and *Concord*, and is as much

much against discord and division as healthful nature is against wounds and sickness. Whence are wars, but from the lusts that war in your members? Jam. 4. 1. The servant of the Lord must not strive: The new Command of special Love to one another, and the strange forbearance, concession, condescension, forgiving and loving enemies themselves, required in the Gospel, must needs do much if truly practised to preserve the Peace of any nation.

9. Holiness assureth us of so great a Reward to those that obey their superiours in things lawful, and offereth us so much better things upon our patience, and submission, then ever disobedience or rebellion can attain, that hereby it must needs tend to the quiet and benefit of Societies. He that is bound to rejoyce and be exceeding glad in his persecution, because his reward in heaven is great, hath small reason to contrive, or fight, or sin to escape the persecution together with the reward, Matth. 5. 11, 12.

10. Holiness teacheth men both to continue obedient and faithful against all temptations, and also to propagate the same resolutions, and to draw all others to obedience with us. It was the excellency of Christs example, that he would be obedient even when he was falsely accused of treason, and charged as an usurper of Cæsars right. If we should be called seditious, disobedient, rebellions, when we are most loyal, it must not move us from our loyalty at all. In all these ten particulars I have shewed, that in the nature of the thing, it is undenyable that Godliness is the strength and beauty and safety of Kingdoms and of all Societies: in that it engageth the subject as well as the Governours, in all that tenderth to their peace and wellfare.

And now you may see by what is said, that there can be no weight in the Objection which pretendeth from the Case of the Waldenses, Albigenes, Bohemians, French, &c. to produce experience against what I am proving. Health may as truly be said to be the cause of sicknesses, as Godliness to be the cause of treachery, rebellion or disloyalty; there being nothing in all the world except God himself, so contray to these as Godliness is.

But you will aske, Whence is it then that we have the foresaid instances? I answer sometime not authority but malice and cruelty driveth poor Christians to a stone-wall, and if they turn

again when they can fly no further, accuseth them of Rebellion ; As it was with the Waldenses, the Bohemians, &c. Sometime Princes and States fall out among themselves, and cannot agree about their Titles, and the Bounds and degrees of their Power : And then whoever the people are against, they are sure from that side to hear the most opprobrious Titles, and be used accordingly if it be in their power. Sometime the right of Government is not easily or generally known : as in the contention between the houses of *York* and *Lancaster* here : And then as one party conquereth one year, and another the next, so the people must be called Traytors and Rebels by each party that prevaileth, if they obeyed and served the other party against them : And if they refuse to obey and defend either of them, they will be condemned by both. Sometime the Politic of Empires and Commonwealths is so imperfect and obscure in the constitution, that the several parties that pretend to interest, cannot agree about their Rights, nor the Lawyers agree among themselves : And the people cannot be thought to be wiser then the Lawyers in the affairs of their profession : If *Nero* and the Senate of *Rome* had each of them commanded the Christians to aid them against the other, it would not have been easie for the wisest and holiest of the Christians then to know which part they should have adhered to and assisted : *Paul* thought not meet to decide any such controversie : He commanded every soul to be subject to the higher powers, and not resist : but he tells them not whether *Cesar* or the Senate was the higher powers in a case of contest and division. Sometime a Traytor usurpeth the Government, and Christians think when they see him settled and in possession, that, though they hate his usurpation, yet they are bound to honour and obey him as being possessed of the Government ; Thus *Gregory* the great too hastily and flatteringly owned and applauded *Phocas* : and the Christian Bishops ordinarily subjected themselves to the Emperours that came in by blood and violence : Thus the Bishops of *Rome*, and of ether Churches in *Italy* and the adjacent parts, submitted themselves (I think too soon) as soon as they perceived him to be conquerour, to *Theodoricus* : and so they did to other conquerours. Sometimes, as the General Councils of *Basil*, *Constance*, &c. determined that a Council is above the Pope, and declared the contrary to be a damnable Heresie, and commanded the Bishops and people

to obey them against the Pope : so Senates and Parliaments and the Majority of the States men and Lawyers may tell the people that are unacquainted with such Law-cases, that in this or that they are bound to obey them, upon highest penalties, and that they shall receive to themselves condemnation if they resist them ; and so may mislead such as intend nothing but to obey the higher powers for Conscience sake. And though the error and commands of Councils and Parliaments excuse not *à toto* an illiterate Laicke that understandeth not those matters, yet surely *à tanto* it is some excuse.

And sometime oppression maketh a wise man mad, *Eccles. 7. 7.* And sometime impatience prevaieth with the weak to do things unwarrantable : & humane passion blindeth Reason : & sometime Temptations prevail in this as in other cases. And sometimes Hypocrites, that never had any true Religion, do shew their carnal dispositions, and unmortified lusts and passions and pride, by their rebellion against their lawful Governours : and then Religion must bear the blame of the actions of those that counterfeit Religion : and of those crimes which it doth most prohibite and condemn.

In a word, Be the accusation against any particular person just or unjust, nothing is more sure and clear then that he is most unjust that will charge the Christian Religion as guilty of Countenancing any Rebellions, Conspiracies, sedition, disobedience, faction or divisions. Christ went before us in his own example to pay tribute to *Cesar* : and commanded us to give to *Cesar* the things that are *Casars* : and their false accusing him and condemning him as an offender against *Cesar*, did no whit move him from the duty of his state of humiliation. What can be more against all Treason and perfidiousness, then that holy doctrine which commandeth us the exactest performance of every lawful promise, much more of our Oaths, and duties of Allegiance ? what can be more against Rebellions then that holy doctrine which teacheth us a life of patience and meekness, condemning private revenge, and commanding us rather to turn the other cheek to him that smiteth us, and to give our coat to him that taketh away our cloak, and go two miles with him that would compell us to go one, that is, to suffer yet more, rather then revenge ourselves or break peace, or order, or raise wars, to escape such injuries ? It is a crucified Christ that conquered by suffering, that

is your example: And our Religion is but our Conformity to him in his sufferings and his holiness. He hath made it part of our duty to himself to obey Kings and Rulers, and all Superiours, not only the good, but the froward, and to take it patiently if we suffer for well-doing, and not to return so much as a reviling, dishonouring word, or murmuring, rebellious thought. It is not fighting for our selves, but following him with the Cross, and forsaking all that we have, that Christ hath made the work of his disciples, and the necessary condition of his promise of salvation, *Luke 14. 33*. There is no Master in all the world that so strictly commandeth Patience and forbearance, and forgiving and Love, and Peace and submission to one another as Jesus Christ doth: He sets the hearts of all his servants on another Kingdom, and tells them they have greater things to mind then riches or honours or domination upon earth. He taketh the bone of contention from before them, and bids them leave such things as these to the men of the world, that have their portion in this life. You may as honestly say that the Sun is the greatest cause of darkness, as that Christ and holiness are the cause of seditions, rebellions, treasons, or perfidiousness in the world. All the world set together hath not done so much as he hath done against them. If men threaten hanging and quartering to such offences, Christ threatneth damnation in hell fire to them: And would you wish him to inflict a sharper punishment, or more severely to manifest his hatred of the crimes!

I tell you therefore if you should find Rebellion and Sedition among Christians, it is but as you may find corruption in the bodies of the living, which is contrary to life and health, and to be found much more among the dead. I am not here pleading for individual persons, but for Christianity and Godliness. If any professed Christians forsake the way of Patience and Subjection, and turn to Rebellion and disloyalty, they do far forsake Religion and Godliness, and much more wrong and offend their heavenly master, then their King and Governours. Plead who will for the wickedness of such men; for my part I will not. I am sure Christ will not plead for their *sin* which he condemneth. He may *justifie* them *from* it, upon repentance; but he will never *justifie* them *for* it and *in* it. It is not because they are *godly* but for *want* of *Godliness*, that any men have ever been guilty of rebellions, or resisting Lawfull powers: As Dr. Ward hath fully proved

proved in his Sermon on *Rom. 13. 2.* Nothing more tendeth to the ruine of Rulers and people, then to hearken to the Devil and the Enemies of *Holiness*, that would perswade the world into a conjunction with them in the Enmity against the way of Godliness and the faithful servants of the Lord, upon pretence that they are adversaries to Governours and Government. It is a weighty truth that the foresaid Doctor begins his Sermon with [“Among all the stratagems of the Devil, tending to the “undermining of Religion, and the subversion of the souls of “men, though there cannot be any more unreasonable, yet there “was never any more unhappily succesful then the creating and “fomenting an Opinion in the world, that Religion is an Enemy “to Government, and the bringing sincerity and zeal in Religion into jealousy and disgrace with the Civil Powers.”] It was “by this Jealousie blown into the heads of the High Priests and “the Sanhedrim amongst the Jews, and of *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, that Christ himself was accused, condemned and executed on a tree: By this the Apostles were haled before the “Governours of Provinces; forced from one City to fly to another: for this they endured bonds and sundry kinds of “death. It was through this fancy that the Christians for “three hundred years together endured the rage of Heathen “Emperours, being destitute, afflicted and tormented: Our “Lord Christ was traduced as an enemy to *Cesar*, a man refractory to the Roman Laws, and a *Non-conformist* to the “Religion and Laws of his Countrey.”] Thus and more that Author. So that it is no new thing for the most innocent and holy and excellent persons to suffer as enemies to the Government where they lived; nay it hath been the common case: nor is it strange to hear Religion and Holiness charged with these crimes which they are most against.

As for the malicious slanders of the Papists against the Reformed Churches, as if they had promoted all their Reformation by Rebellion, they have been confuted sufficiently by many. At this time, I shall only desire the Reader that would be satisfied in this, and understand the Protestant doctrine in these points, to read Bishop *Bilsons* [Difference between Christian subjection, and unchristian Rebellion:] Especially pag. 382. and from 494. to 522. Also *Hookers Eccles. Polit.* the last Book (lately published.)

And if he would know whether it be an Article of the very Religion of the Papists, that *the Pope may give away the Dominions of Temporal Lords that deny Transubstantiation, or hold such like points which he calleth Heresie, or that will not exterminate all that hold them out of their Dominions, and that he may discharge their subjects and vassals from their Allegiance*: I only intreat him with his own eyes to read the Decrees of their approved general Council at the *Laterane* under Pope *Innocent 3.* and let him but believe his eye-sight. And for their case and confutation, let him also read King *James* his Answer to *Perron's* Oration.

Having thus interposed an Answer to their Objection, that say, *Religion* hath brought forth *Rebellions* (which I confess that *Religion* which teacheth *Rebellion* hath done; but the *Christian Religion* which condemneth it, and engageth men against it as aforesaid, doth not) I now proceed to some other proofs, that *Godliness* is the greatest security and establishment to Kingdoms and all Societies.

12. *Godliness* above all things engageth men to be true to their *Covenants*; to keep all their Oathes and Promises of Obedience to Kings and to other superiours; and to be faithful and trusty in all their duties to one another; So horrid is the sin of Perjury and Covenant-breaking, that God hath condemned it, not only in the holy Scriptures, but also in the Law of Nature. He will not bear with it in the *Greatest Princes*; how then shall Perfidious subjects scape? What fair excuses had *Saul* for his breaking the Vow and Covenant with the *Gibeonites*? He might have said,
 1. They procured it from *Josbna* by a meer cheat. And therefore no benefit belonged to them from their own sin and fraud.
 2. That *Josbna* not knowing who they were, ignorantis non est consensus.
 3. That God had forbid to spare any of those Nations.
 4. That it was not *Saul* that made this Oath and Covenant, but *Josbna*.
 5. That *Saul* did it in zeal for the people of *Israel*. Yet for all this in *Dauids* dayes there was a famine in the land, for this sin of *Saul*, which was not expiated till seven of his sons (or posterity) were hanged at the *Gibeonites* request: And though *David* might well see that he might be censured as contriving all this himself for the extirpation of the line of *Saul*, yet would he not forbear the execution, 2 *Chron.* 21. And when the people murmured at *Josbna* and the Heads of *Israel* for sparing them at first,

first, they are answered with the Obligation of the inviolable Oath, *Josh. 9.*

So though *Zedekiah* was the King of *Babylons* Captive, force could not excuse his perjury and Covenant-breaking, but God severely condemned and avenged it.

So that every Subject that hath but bound himself in Allegiance to his Sovereign, is under such an Obligation as to a true Believer is more dreadful to violate, then it is to suffer death.

Yea God hath written such a Law against *Perjury*, even in Nature it self, that he must needs be afraid of it, that is not a flat Atheist, lest his appeal to God, do bring the vengeance of God upon him: And in this life the perjured ordinarily meet with that Divine revenge which is the fore-runner of eternal vengeance: The perjured are unfit for humane Society; hated by God, and never more to be trusted by man, till sound Repentance make a change: Which made *Augustine* determine, that he that urgeth another to forswear himself, is as much worse then a murderer, as killing the soul is worse then killing the Body. Seeing then that Religion doubleth these sacred bonds, and casteth Hell-fire into the face of the perjured and perfidious, it must needs be a singular preserver of Kingdoms and all Societies, which fall in pieces where these bonds are loosed; and fall into the hands of God, who is a consuming fire, especially to perjured men.

13. Moreover it is only Godliness that obeyeth with true Loyalty, and carryeth on all works methodically for the common Good. As he that will obey every Justice of Peace in all things that he commandeth, without respect to the Laws or will of the Sovereign Power, may be sooner a Traytor then truly obedient; (for every Justice or Lord may arm him against his Prince) so he that will obey the Princes of the earth, without respect to the Will or Interest of the Eternal God, will be but a Traytor to God, under pretence of obeying Princes, that are but his Officers and Servants. But the godly begin at God in their obedience; and therefore they proceed methodically, and obey men upon right grounds and in their proper places. It is not the most absolute obedience to man that is the best. He that should command men causelessly to fire his Countrey, or to destroy the innocent, or so ravish Virgins or mens Wives, were not to be obeyed, as *Doeg* obeyed

obeyed *Saul*; but God is first to be obeyed. It is he that begins, proceeds, and ends with God, that is sure to do no wrong, nor be misled.

14. *Holiness* possesseth men with a *publike spirit*, and maketh the case of others to be our own, and teacheth us to do as we would be done by; and giveth every man that hath it, a compassion to others in their distress, and an earnest desire after their welfare, and a rejoicing in it; when ungodly men are all for themselves. *Psalms* 137. *1 Cor.* 12. 25, 26, 27. & 13. *Acts* 2. 44. *Mat.* 7. 12, *Mark* 12. 33.

15. *Godliness* engageth men in Doing good, as the very business of their lives, which is to be Rewarded with everlasting Happiness: So that besides what is forced from men by Law, they are to be still in the exercise of Charity, and to be zealous of good works; and to make it their study to do all the good they can: And therefore they are certainly the profitablest members in any Society, that are most truly Godly, *Luke* 10. 29, 30, &c. *Dent.* 15. 9. *Luke* 6. 38. *Gal.* 6. 9, 10.

16. Moreover *Holiness* teacheth men to forgive wrongs, and to Love our enemies, and to let go our right, rather then to break Peace and revenge our wrongs: and to forbear even going to Law contentiously, and where our putting up injuries meerly to our selves, may suffice for the avoiding of it. *Luke* 6. 27, 28, 29. *Mat.* 6. 14, 15. *1 Cor.* 6. 7. And what contention can there be where these Rules are practised? except when the interest of God or others is violated; which is not in our power to remit. If you say, that *These things are good if they were practised*: I answer, 1. You confess then that *Holiness* is good: For the Rule is Good, whether it be practised or not. 2. I answer, that so much as any man is sanctified, he doth practise it. And therefore if any man live not according to the Rule which he professeth to live by, that is from the remnant of that sin within him, which the wicked plead for, and for want of more of that *Godliness* which you distaste. Make him more holy, and he will do all this.

17. *Holiness* secureth every Society, and interesteth them in the most impregnable defence; even in the Love and favour of the Lord; and in his many sure and precious promises. He hath engaged his Almightyness and Fidelity for such, and tendreth them as the apple of his eye, and hath promised that he will be their defence, *Zach.* 2. 8. *Psalms* 5. 11. & 7. 10. & 59. 9, 16, 17. & 62. 2. whereas the

the ungodly are under his curse, *Psalm* 1. 6. & 37. And which of these Societies is liker to be happy?

18. *Godliness is the surest way to furnish every Society with all the blessings that are truly good for them.* For they have the favour and promise of him that is the giver of them all. *Rom.* 8. 28. *Psalm* 34. 10. & 84. 11. & 23. *Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,* *1 Tim.* 4. 8. & 6. 6. *Mat.* 6. 33. But wickedness is the certain way to ruine. *Even one sinner destroyeth much good, Eccl.* 9. 18. and one godly man hindreth much evil, as the case of *Joseph, Moses, Daniel,* and many others tells you.

19. Moreover it is *Godliness that is the honour of all Societies:* Without this their wisdom is meer folly, and their Riches are but the fetters of their slavery, and canker to gnaw them and testify against them, and their greatest victories may be but murders which shall damn them: and their splendour in the world is but the sign of their misery in the eyes of all fore-seeing men: *Prov.* 14. 34. [*Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.*] What Glory can be equal to the Glory of our interest in God, and of our being his people, and doing his work, and having his presence?

20. Lastly, *How can that be worst on earth, that is so good in Heaven?* The perfection of Holiness hereafter, with the Holy Love, and Praises, and Enjoyments of the Saints, will be their Glory. If you think this worst in your Societies on earth, what do you but renounce it? If Heaven be worst for you, come not thither. If the participation of that which is the felicity of the glorified, be not the felicity of all Societies, I desire none of their felicity.

What if Saints from Heaven would come down and dwell among you here on earth? I beseech you as men of reason, answer me these two Questions.

1. Whether you do not know or verily believe, that they would be more Holy, and Pure, and Exact, and strict, and more averse to all sin, then any of those are that now you dislike as too precise?

2. Whether you would therefore call them Puritanes, and hate them, and cast them out, or imprison them, or take them for the troublers of your Countries, or rather for the honour and

and blessing of your Countries? What you would do by them, that do by those that come nearest to them among you.

CHAP. V.

Times of Holiness are the Best Times.

AND now I have given you all this Evidence, I dare leave it to the judgement of any man that is fit to judge, Whether it be the godly or ungodly that are the *Better Magistrates*, or *Better Pastors* of the Churches, or *Better Members* of the Common-wealth, or of *any Society*? Judge now whether the *Places* and *Times* are not *Best* that are *most Godly*? And whether it be the *Godly* or the *Ungodly*, that are the *Troublers* of the world?

And yet it hath ever been the practice of ungodly men, to charge it upon them that Fear the Lord, that all the troubles of the world are long of them. *We were all quiet, say they, before this Religion and preciseness troubled us; and this is it, that since it came among us, hath set us all together by the ears.* But if these men be yet reasonable, I desire them to consider,

I. *That this hath alwayes been the old complaint of the most wicked men, which God himself hath testified against: When Lot did but gently admonish the abominable Sodomites to forbear a villany not to be named, Gen. 19. 7, 8, 9. [I pray you Brethren, do not so wickedly.] What said they to him? and how did they take it? Why [they said, stand back: and they said again, This One fellow came into sojourn, and he will needs be a Judge! Now will we deal worse with thee then with them.] Is not this the case between us now? How are we unpeaceable? Because we are against sin? If we would hinder men from wronging God, and from condemning their own souls, and others, then forsooth, we are their troublers, and we judge them, and we disturb their Peace? Just like the Sodomites, [These precise fellows say they, will needs be our Judges, and we must be ruled by them; before they came among us we had none of this ado;] But did not God, think you, decide the controversie aright? He first took Lot and his family away,*

away, that the Sodomites might be troubled with that precise and busie fellow no more; and then he sent fire from Heaven on Sodom, and consumed them all, making them an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 7. Or as it is fully set forth by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9. [Turning the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, he condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example to those that after should live ungodly: (Mark this) And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust to the day of Judgement to be punished.]

And now who is it that was troublesom, and the cause of evil? Was it Lot, or was it Sodom? Take heed lest God take the Lots that trouble you from among you, and when you are rejoicing that you are rid of them, he serve you worse then he served Sodom.

In the daies of Noah, no question but that Preacher of Righteousness seemed to the world a singular and a self-conceited fellow: But did not God decide the controversie whether it were Noah, or they, that were the troublers of the world? Saith Peter 2 Pet. 2, 5. [God spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a Preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.]

When Israel fell before the men of Ai, it was a doubt who it was that was the cause of that calamity; but God proved it to be Achan, who is stoned upon this sentence of Joshua, Josh. 7. 25. [Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day.]

2. And consider I pray you, what a Quietness it is that you have, before you are troubled by the Godly? It is a Quietness in the high way to Hell: You had the priviledge of damning your souls without disturbance from these precise controllers. Hach not Christ told us, that the Devil is thus like a strong man armed, that while he keepeth his Palace, his goods are in Peace: but when a stronger then he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoils.] Luke 11. 21, 22. The hearts and the Nations that are not conquered by Christ, are the Devils Garrisons and possessions. Do

you think that it is best that he possess them still in Peace ? Or that the Preachers of Christ, that plant his Ordinance against them, and batter them, till they are forced to yield, are therefore busie troublesom fellows ? What is it for, but for your deliverance, that are *Satans captives at his will* ? 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26.

3. And might you not on this ground also account Christ himself the troubler of the world, as much, and a thousand times more then us ? For he doth more to disturb men in their sins then any of we : and he doth more for Holiness then all the world besides. And in this sense he confesseth and fore-tells us, that, *he came not to send Peace, but division into the world*, into Towns, and Countries, and Families, Luke 12. 51, 52, 53. If we can have no Peace with you, unless we will disobey our Lord, and serve the Devil and the flesh, and damn our own souls, and suffer you to do the like, then keep your Peace among your selves; we will none of that Peace : we have no mind to buy your friendship and good words at such a rate ! If *your peace will stand with our peace with God, and peace of Conscience*, we will gladly accept of it : If it will not, we can be without it. Your souls are like sores that may not be searched, or a broken bone that must not be set, for fear of hurting you : You are like men that must have that which would kill them ; or like children that will cry if they be but taken out of their dung, or kept from fire, or from knives. If we do but cross you in the way to Hell, we trouble you, and we break the peace ? Yea, and if we will not cast away our souls everlastingly for company ? And is this the case ? Is this the breaking of your Peace ? The Lord will shortly be a Righteous Judge between you and us, and tell you, who it was that was the Troubler of the Towns and Countries, and of the world.

You find *Ahab* and *Elijah* at this contest. *Ahab* takes him for the Troubler of Israel when a heavy famine was among them : *Elijah* saith, No ; but it was *Ahab* and his Fathers house that had troubled Israel by their wickedness, 1 Kings 18. 17, 18. And which think you was in the right, the Prophet or the King ?

Why Sirs, What is it that *Godliness* doth, that it should be taken for the Troubler of the world, when *ungodliness* is taken for your peace ? Is it our perswading or hindring you from sin
that

that troubleth you ? And will not the everlasting fruit of it trouble you more ? Then even say, that washing you, or sweeping your houses, or curing your sores, or sickness, or perswading you not to kill your selves, is a troubling of you ! Or is it, (as the Lord hath told us it will be, *Matth. 5. 10; 11. John 15. 18, 19. 1 Pet. 4. 4, 5.*) because we are not such as you, and will not do as you do, and be of your opinion, and forsake our Lord to keep you company ? Is it not with good reason ? When we know you cannot save us harmless : and will not answer for us before the Lord ? We know that every man must answer for himself, and therefore we durst not trust you, if you would promise us to bring us off : It is best for you to study better how to answer for *your selves*. But if you are resolved on it, that ungodly you *will be*, and that you will venture on Hell to scape a holy life, why should not you give us leave to pity you, and to forbear your folly, and to save our selves ? Will it do you any harm that *others* should be saved ? Or that *others* should be Godly ? Your *own* sanctification indeed cannot stand with your lusts and fleshly pleasures : but *another* mans may. It will take none of your vain-glory, or wealth, or sensual delights from you, that *another* man is sanctified, or devoted unto God. And therefore be not angry with us, if we obey the Holy Ghost, that calleth to us, *Acts 2. 40.* [*Save your selves from this untoward generation.*]

Object. *O but (saith the ungodly crew) it was never a good world since there was so much Religion, and preaching, and preciseness, and so much ado about serving God ! It was a better world, when we had but a short Service read on Sundays, and played, and merrily talkt together the rest of the day ! There was more Love and good neighbourhood then amongst men then there is now : There was not then so much deceit, and censuring, and oppressing, and covetousness in the world : There was more peace, and plenty, and a better world it was then now.*

Matters of peace and plenty change often in the same age. And certainly you have as little hinderance now, from being as good as you have a mind to be, as ever your fore-fathers had. Two things I have to say to your Objection.

1. If this be true that the world is so bad, which part is it of the world that you mean ? Is it all, or some ? Not all sure ; that were too horrible censoriousness to say. Then God would presently

sently destroy the world. *Sodome had one Lot, and his family in it. Well ? it is but some then that are so bad. And which part is it ? Is it the Godly, or the Ungodly ? If Godliness be naught, then Heaven is naught, where there is nothing else ; And then take it not ill to be shut out ? If it be the Ungodly that are naught, thats it that I am saying. It is time then to leave it, and to turn to God. Is it not you your selves that make the complaint that are the men that make the world so bad ? Is it not you that are so Covetous and worldly that you have nothing for the poor, and no time to spare for the work that you were made for ? nor scarce any room, to think or speak of the life to come ? Is it not you that have so little Charity that you even hate men for Loving and serving God, and seeking diligently to save their souls ? Its true, that there was never greater wickedness in the world then since there hath been so much Preaching. But What is that wickedness, and in whom ? It is the despising and disobeying the calls of God ; and the hating and neglecting of a holy life. Those that are saved by the Gospel, may say that it was a happy message unto them : but those that slight it, and willfully sin in the openest light, may well say that it is a bad world with them : and worse it is, and will be for ever, if they be not converted, then if they had never heard the Gospel : It is you, and such as you that despise the mercies of the Lord, that make it a bad world ; and then you impudently complain of it, and charge it on them that will not be as bad as your selves : and take away the candle and shut the windows, that the light may not trouble you.*

2. Well ! but say you the world was better when there was less preaching, and less ado about the serving of God, and our salvation. I do not believe you, and I will tell you why, yea, why I am certain that your words are false.

1. Because you contradict the Lord. God saith those times are best when there is most of the Light of the Gospel, and most helps for our salvation, and when the people are most Holy. The increase of Light and Holiness is a principal part of the Glory of the Kingdom of Christ, and of the Promises to the Gospel Church, as you may see, *Isa. 9. 2. & 36. 26. & 42. 6. & 60. 3. Mat. 4. 16. Luk. 2. 32. Joh. 3. 19, 20.* The word of God is the greatest blessing under heaven : together with a heart to obey and practise it, *Luk. 11. 28.* Blessed are they that hear the word
of

of God and keep it.] *Psal.* 106. 3. & 119. 1, 2. & 1. 1, 2. God himself pronounceth them blessed that meditate day and night in his Law, and that make it their whole delight; and because of the increase of Light and Holiness extollet the times of the Gospel far above those of the Law, affirming the least in this Kingdom of God to be greater as to the honour and priviledge of his station, then the Prophets, or *John Baptist*, *Matth.* 11. 11, 12. And would you wish me to believe such ignorant men as you, before the God of Heaven that contradictheth you?

2. *I will not believe you, because your objection is nothing but a Blasphemous accusation of the Living God.* If it were true that Preaching is bad, it is Christ then that is bad that doth command it. But I am sure that Christ is not bad: and that such as Blaspheme him, do it to their cost. It is he that hath laid a *Necessity* on us, and *wot be unto us if we preach not the Gospel*, *1 Cor.* 9. 16. and that chargeth us to feed the flock of God, *1 Pet.* 5. 2. Yea the spirit chargeth us before God and the Lord *Iesus Christ* who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, *that we preach the word and be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.*] If any one be to be blamed for all this preaching and stir for heaven, it is Christ that chargeth it so strictly upon us. And if thou dare lay the blame upon the Lord, speak out, and stand to it at judgement.

3. I know it is false that you say, that the world is the worse for all this preachig and Godliness, because *it is against the very office of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost.* Christ was a diligent preacher himself, and dare you accuse him for it? He came into the world to bring us the Light of heavenly Truth: and dare you say that it were better be without it. It is the work of the Holy Ghost to illuminate and sanctifie men, and do you think that he doth us hurt? Christ dyed to wash and purifie by the word and Spirit, the Church which is his Body, that he might present it *spotless to the Father*, *Eph.* 5. 26. 27. And darest thou say that Christ came to do us harm? By this thy despising of his benefits, thou shewest that thou hast yet no part in him or in his saving benefits, but art in the gall of bitterness and bond of thy iniquities, and thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

4. Moreover

4. Moreover you are not to be belived because you speak against the experience of all the Prophets and Apostles of Christ. David had rather be a door keeper in the house of God, then dwell in the tents of wickedness; and judged a day in his Courts to be better then a thousand, Psal. 84. 10. and accounted them the blessed men that might even dwell in the house of God, and be daily taken up in holy praise and worship, Psal. 63. 4. & 92. 13. & 23. 6. When he was forced from the house and publick worship of God, it was his daily lamentation, and he fainteth, and panteth, and longeth after the house and worship of God again, Psal. 42. & 84. 2, 3, 4, 5. [How amiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord of hosts? My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God: — Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee: Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways of them.] The Prophet Isaiah saith [In the way of thy judgements O Lord have we waited for thee: the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee: with my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.] This was the mind of all the Prophets and Apostles: and God hath told us that it is the practice of all blessed men, to Meditate in Gods word day night, Psal. 1. 2. And yet will you say that it was a better world when there was less of this? O self-condemning Hypocrites! Why do you so much profess to honour the Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs of Christ, if you think that they were the troublers of the world, and that their doctrine and practice makes us worse? Why do you honour them with the name of Saints, and yet despise both their doctrine and practice in those that do but endeavour seriously to imitate them! Why keep you Holy days in remembrance of the dead Saints, and say that the world is the worse for the living Saints? O horrible hypocrisie! to honour their names, and hate their doctrine and course of life, and say that the world was never good since it was troubled with such as they! Do we trouble you with our Preaching, and praying, and our stir for heaven? How would Christ and his Apostles have troubled you, that went so far beyond us in all these, and made a greater stir then we, and turned the world (as their enemies charged them) up side down! Act. 17. 6. so baffe was Christ in preaching and doing the work of God, that he neglected

lected to eat his meat for it, *Joh. 4. 34.* and his fleshly kindred would have laid hands on him as if he had been beside himself, *Mark. 3. 21.* It seems if you had then lived, you would have been among the wicked enemies of Christ and of his Disciples, and have said [It was never a good world, since these buſie fellows made ſo much a doe with their Religion !

5. Moreover, you ſpeak againſt the inward feeling and certain experience of all true Chriſtians in the world. They all have taſted and found that excellencie in the holy ways and Ordinances of the Lord, that they value them above all the world. With David they eſteem them above Gold and Silver, *Pſal. 119. 72.* With Solomon they ſay that all the things that we can deſire are not to be compared to them, *Prov. 3. 15. & 8. 11.* And with Job they value the word of God above their neceſſary food, *Job. 23. 12.* And with Paul they count all things Loſs and dung in compariſon of the excellent knowledge of Chriſt, *Phil. 3. 7, 8.* They know that it is a thouſand times better with them, ſince God converted them to a holy life then it was before, as well as you know that you are better in your health, then you were in ſickneſs. Try whether you can make men that ever were among thoſe where plague and war and famine raigned, to believe that [it was never a good world, ſince this plague and war and famine ceaſed.] You may as ſoon make wiſe men believe this, as make experienced godly men, to believe that it is worſe with them for their turning to the Lord, and living, holy, heavenly lives. You can never by all your doating and ſelf-conceited prating, make thoſe believe whom God hath ſanctified, that they were in a better caſe before, when they were the ſlaves of Satan, and ſerved ſin, & were under the wrath and curſe of God. They feel that within them that will never ſuffer them to believe you. The health of their recovered ſouls: their experience of the Goodneſs of the ways of God: the comforts they have had in the pardon of ſin and the hopes of Glory, do make them know that you talke diſtractedly, when you tell them that they were better before, or that the world is the worſe for the grace of God.

6. And we cannot believe you, when you ſpeak evil of a holy courſe, becauſe your words are againſt all Religion, and common reaſon; and much more, deſtructive of the Chriſtian faith. If God be not to be Loved with all our hearts, and ſerved with our greateſt care, then he is not God: or then there is no ſuch thing

as *Religion* to be regarded. A God that is worse then the Creature, is no God. If we must not seek first the *Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof* (Matth. 6. 33.) as Christ hath commanded, then it is in vain to seek it at all. If there be no *Heaven or Hell*, let us lay by all *Religion*. But if there be, that man that thinks it not worth his greatest care and diligence to be saved, doth forfeit the reputation of his reason with his soul. Will you believe that man that saith he believeth that there is an Everlasting Glory to be sought, and made sure of in this life of our pilgrimage and warfare, and yet thinks it not worth our seeking for above all, and worthy all our cost and labour? He speaks a gross and blockish contradiction. A Heaven no better then Earth, is no Heaven. A Heaven that is not worthy the labour of a holy life, is no Heaven. And a God that is not worthy of all that we can do, is no God. Either plainly say that you are Pagans and worse, and believe not any life but this: Or else live as Christians, if you will be called *Christians*; say not that you believe there is a *Hell*, if you think a *Holy life* too dear to scape it.

7. Yea this is not all, but your words do tend to *Brutishness* it self. Pagans did believe (for the most part) a life after this. And Julian that Apostate Infidel himself doth prescribe to all his Idols Priests a very strict and Religious life, according to the Religion which he owned; and professeth that all care and temperance and piety should be used to please God, and obtain the happiness to come. And shall men called *Christians* take the very *Infidels* for *Puritans*, and be worse then *Heathens*? If we have not another life to look after, then what are we but *beasts* that perish? If you think that you die like *beasts*, call your selves *beasts*, and never more own the name of men. If you are not *beasts* but men, then have you souls to save or lose, to be happy or miserable for ever. And is it not worth all our care & labour to look after them?

8. Another reason why I will never believe you, that the world was better when there was less preaching and Religion, is because you speak against the very end and nature of preaching and Religion. For the word of God is written and preached to this very end, to make men better. And is that the way to undoe the world, to perswade them to amend! O Impudent malignant tongues! What doth the word of God speak against but *sin*? Doth it anywhere speak against any thing that is Good? or doth

it anywhere command you any thing that is *bad*? Let the bitterest enemy of God upon earth, say so, and prove it if he can. I here in defiance of the Devil, and all his instruments and servants, challenge them in their bitterest malice, to say the worst they can of the Gospel, or of true Religion, and prove that ever it encouraged men to sin, or that ever any was a loser by it! O wonderful! Must the God of heaven indite such Laws against all evil, condemning it, and threatening damnation for it: and yet will these wretches have the faces to say that it is long of the *Scripture* or of *Religion* that the world is *Evil*? What! Will preaching *against your wickedness* make you *wicked*? If it do, be it known to the faces of you, that it is *you*, and not *preaching* that shall be one day found to be the cause, and be condemned for it. Must Princes and Parliaments make Laws to hang thieves and murderers! and when they have done, will you say it is long of *them* and their Laws that men are *robbed and murdered*? Why this is not yet so impudently unjust as you deal with God. For they threaten but hanging, and he threatneth everlasting damnation against sin; and executeth it on all the unconverted, as sure as he threatneth it. And would you have him yet do more to testify his dislike of sin? Tell me, thou that blasphemest the holy commands of thy Creator? Wouldst thou have him do more then *everlastingly to damn unconverted sinners*, to prove that he is no friend or cause of sin? what should he do more? Is there a greater plague then Hell to threaten? Or wouldst thou have him do more to shew how much he loveth Goodness, then to *command* it, and *persuade* men daily to it, and to promise *Everlasting Glory* for their *Reward*? Is there any *greater Reward* to be promised? I tell thee blasphemer, to the Justifying of my Lord, that all the world hath never done the thousandth part against mens faults, as God hath done. Never were there stricter Laws against them, then his Laws. And never more terrible executions. And yet wilt thou say, that its long of God, or *Scripture*, or *Religion*, that the world is naught? If thou stay a little longer impenitently in thy blasphemy, till death have but given thee the mortal stroak, (and its hard at hand) thou shalt then be answered in another manner, and God will easily justifie himself, and stop all such vile and arrogant mouths, and confute thee with an everlasting Vengeance. Remember that thou wast forewarned.